



DAVISON CE HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS

POLICY AND MANAGEMENT DOCUMENT

Attendance Policy

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1 Policy Statement (or Policy Summary)

Regular and punctual attendance underpins high achievement and this policy sets out how Davison CE High School for Girls will work to achieve the best attendance possible for every student.

2 Context

Good attendance is essential. Attending school ensures that students are receiving a coherent education programme, it supports the development of good social relationships, ensures students are safe and their welfare is being monitored. It supports health and well-being, builds confidence and offers a sense of belonging as a member of a community. Good attendance is an essential element in developing the skills needed for economic well-being.

West Sussex has a statutory duty under section 437 of the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children receive a suitable education and for most that requires that they are registered at a school. West Sussex also has responsibility under section the Education Act 1996 for legal action to enforce attendance at school and The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The duty to enforce attendance is exercised through the Education Welfare Service and Pupil Entitlement Team.

It is part of the statutory duty of the school's governing body to monitor student attendance and to seek ways in which attendance can be improved, particularly for persistent non-attenders, working through school staff and Education Welfare Service to secure improvements for individuals and cohorts. School attendance targets are set and monitored by EWS on behalf of the LA and DfE with the percentage of overall attendance and the number of persistent absentees collected as Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) used by Ofsted to make judgements about the school.

Clearly, attendance is greatly influenced by parental attitudes and behaviour, with patterns of school attendance being established in First and Middle School, before students arrive at Davison. Therefore, it is imperative that parents / carers are involved in any actions seeking to make improvements and are kept well informed about attendance levels.

School attendance is a key indicator of a student's level of happiness with their school experience and therefore needs to be considered by a range of staff involved in a student's welfare. The roles of key staff are described below.

3 Stakeholders and Users

3.1 Policy Stakeholders

West Sussex County Council via the Education Welfare Service

Governors

Headteacher

Heads of Key Stage 3 and 4

Lead Tutors

Form tutors

Subject Teachers

Pastoral Managers

Students

Parents / carers

3.2 Policy Users

West Sussex County Council via the Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school

Governors

Headteacher

Heads of Key Stage 3 and 4

Lead Tutors

Form tutors

Subject Teachers

Pastoral Managers

Students

Parents / carers

4 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this policy is to support the development of the best conditions by which school attendance is sustained at the highest possible level for all students at Davison CE High School for Girls. This will be achieved by

making clear the roles and responsibilities of each person involved in school attendance

showing in some detail the strategies to be employed to improve attendance

setting out the manner in which attendance is to be regularly reviewed on an individual, group and whole school basis

The objective of the policy is to improve school attendance for individual students, for form and year groups and for the whole school.

5 Detailed Guidelines to Implement Policy

5.1 Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / form tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

5.1.1 Registration Codes

The school is required to keep an up to date and accurate register of attendance. The following codes will be used in registers :

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not Counted in possible attendances
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed only in exceptional circumstances)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances

Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

The register will be called promptly at **8.40 am** and **2 pm** by each form tutor and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

The registers will close at **9.00 am** and **2.05 pm**. Any student who arrives **after** the closing of the register will count as **absent**. Students who arrive before the register closes will be counted as **present** but will be dealt with under the school's policy on punctuality and lateness (see para 5.3.6)

5.1.2 Categorising Absence

A mark will be made in respect of each child during registration. Any child who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

Davison CE High School for Girls recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents / carers that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Davison will therefore challenge parents / carers about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

- i) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;
- ii) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:
 - (a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example -
 - a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
 - a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion - in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
 - in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents / carers have sought permission in advance (see para 5.3.7 for the school's policy on term-time holidays);
 - (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

- (c) where the student has a medical appointment (although parents / carers should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards - or send her to school beforehand);
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents / carers belong;
- (f) the student lives more than two miles (if she is under eight) or three miles (if she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) the student is of no fixed abode, her parent/carer is engaged in a trade which required her to travel, the student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

iii) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the student is shopping during school hours;
- the student is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a family birthday;
- the student is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent/carer is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

5.1.3 Class Registers

In order to track students' whereabouts throughout the day, deal with any truancy that occurs after morning or afternoon registration and to ensure the safety of students, subject teachers will take a register at the beginning of every lesson to record absence and lateness. Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up by the Pastoral Managers and measures taken to locate the student. If the student is not found on the site, the school will make an effort to inform parent/carer that their daughter does not appear to be on the school premises.

5.1.4 Staff Training

The Pastoral Manager will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

5.2 Collection and analysis of data

The Pastoral Manager will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Headship team, parents / carers and the governing body (see para. above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

Attendance is monitored by colour family, year group, tutor group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

5.3 Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

Attendance has a very high profile at Davison and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in colour groups. Students are encouraged to record their own attendance in their planners. Parents / carers are regularly reminded in bulletins and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

Davison CE High School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week, sending home a request for information on unexplained absence on specified days.

5.3.1 Reporting Absence

If your daughter is unwell and unable to attend school parents / carers must report the absence to the school before 9.15am. Absence should be reported via the Studybugs app. This is available to download on Apple or Android devices. If you are unable to use the Studybugs app, absence can be reported via the absence line 01903 233835. Press 1 to leave a message.

5.3.2 First-day calling

Davison CE High School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents / carers will receive a text on the first day a student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage, students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents'/carers' knowledge.

5.3.3 Meetings with parents / carers

Where there is an emerging pattern to a student's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will contact parents / carers to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents / carers and student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit - usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents / carers that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them, for example a letter from a medical professional stating the student is unfit for school.

5.3.4 Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued, which incurs a cost payable by the parents / carers. Serious cases of non-attendance may result in prosecution and a large fine payable by parents / carers.

5.3.5 Fixed Penalty Notice

If a student has a minimum of 10 school sessions absence recorded as unauthorised absence, for whatever reason, in a 10 week period, their parents / carers can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). This would apply to 10 school sessions or more unauthorised holiday absence. They may also be used for students who are persistently late for school or for a combination of reasons.

The first FPN carries a fine of £60 per parent/carer, per child, if paid within 21 days and rises to £120 if paid within 28 days. IF no payment is made the Authority is required to begin proceedings in the Magistrates court for the original offence of poor school attendance and if proven the fine could be up to £2500 and/or a parenting order or a community sentence may be imposed. There is no right of appeal once an FPN has been issued.

5.3.6 Lateness and punctuality

Students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Students who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the student to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A student who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Welfare Service.

Students who arrive late for school but before the register closes will be marked as late. **The following sanctions will be applied for persistent lateness:**

- **3 late marks in a term = 30 minute Detention**
- **5 late marks in a term = 60 minute Detention**
- **10 late marks in a term = 5 period Internal Exclusion**
- **15 late marks in a term = 6 period Internal Exclusion**
- **Any more may result in a Fixed Term Exclusion**

For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Students arriving late should therefore report to Student Services Reception. **It is important that all students arriving late following this procedure.**

For the same reason it is important that students leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day sign in and out at Student Services Reception.

5.3.7 Term Time Holidays

In September 2013 the policy changes following amendment to the Education Act 2006. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right** and is now actively discouraged by the legislation. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, of the exceptional circumstances which the parent/carer is requesting the school take into consideration. The decision is made at the discretion of the Headteacher. However it is important to note that, in line with the new regulations family holidays are only allowed in very exceptional circumstances e.g. spending a holiday with a terminally sick close family member. Not being able to afford a school holiday break is not considered an exceptional circumstance.

If a holiday is taken which is unauthorised by the school, then a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued if the absence is 10 sessions or more.

The Headteacher will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision, using the request for absence form or, in more complex situations, by letter.

5.3.8 Persistent Absence

A student who is attending 89.9% or less is deemed to be persistently absent. This level of absence is highly detrimental to a student's progress and achievement and therefore the school will take at least one of a variety of steps to encourage improvement in attendance. All students with this level of absence will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer for intervention. Other actions may include:

Close monitoring of attendance by a Pastoral Manager, Form Tutor, Lead tutor including regular conversations for update with the student

95% Initial concern/alert letter sent home.

92-90% Close to 90% (persistently absence) alert letter sent

90% Persistently absent letter sent and request for parents / carers to attend a meeting in school. An action plan will be agreed at this point between the parent/carers, student and the school. A further fall in attendance will require medical evidence from a GP or CAHMS medical professional before any further absence will be authorised.

If a student reaches 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10 week period a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued. If students reaches 20 sessions of unauthorised absence then a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service.

Incentives can be offered to improve attendance and break the cycle of absence

5.4 Roles and Responsibilities

Form Tutor

To ensure register is accurately kept

To work with parents / carers and student to ensure their responsibilities are met

To work within the school to ensure that the conditions exist for the student to feel safe and comfortable in school

To monitor their tutees attendance on a fortnightly basis and after every individual absence.

Lead Tutor

- To support the attendance of all members of the colour family
- To support parents / carers and students in ensuring their responsibilities are met
- To celebrate good attendance within the colour family
- To authorise alert letters to parents / carers
- To particularly support students who fall into the persistent absence category to improve their attendance

Pastoral Manager

- To inform parents / carers of their daughter's absence if no prior notice is given
- To support students who have difficulty maintaining good attendance
- To support parents / carers and students in ensuring their responsibilities are met
- To work within the school to ensure that the conditions exist for the student to feel safe and comfortable in school
- To particularly support students who fall into the persistent absence category to improve their attendance
- To provide the Headteacher with data on attendance as required
- To liaise with outside agencies concerned with attendance
- To change codes after the register has been taken

Headteacher

- To ensure procedures are in place across the school to support good and improving attendance for all students so that targets for attendance are met
- To provide the governing body with the data they need to enable them to monitor attendance effectively and efficiently
- To support all staff in discharging their duties of care to all students, providing a safe and secure environment within the school

Parent/Carer

- To ensure that student arrives at school regularly and on time
- To support attendance by keeping absence requests to a minimum
- To not condone unjustified absence from school
- To notify school on first day of absence (and each day thereafter) by 9.15am - failure to do so could result in the absence being unauthorised
- To contact the school without delay if they have concerns about any aspect of their daughter's life which might affect attendance

Student

To be aware of the importance of regular attendance at school

To attend lessons on time and ready to learn

To follow the procedures of the school if they are late arriving

Governors' responsibilities:

To ensure that an appropriate Attendance Policy is in place and is being implemented

To review attendance regularly and ensure that action is taken to maintain good attendance levels across the school for all students

To agree targets for attendance at a Full Governing Body meeting

6 Monitoring the Policy

The Headteacher will report on attendance in the Headteacher's Report to Governors on a termly basis.

7 Document Information

7.1 Date of next policy review

The policy will be reviewed every three years unless there is a change in operational or legislative procedures.

Police Created: Autumn Term 2011

Policy Reviewed: September 2018

Next Policy Review: Autumn Term 2021

See also :

Request for Absence in School Time

A Davison Parent/Carer Guide to Attendance

Fixed Penalty Notice leaflet

Attendance Percentage Guidance